



Cannabis and HIV/AIDS:

7. Cooking with Cannabis

Included in this series of fact sheets on Cannabis and HIV/AIDS:

1. The Medicinal Use of Cannabis
2. How to Apply to Use Medicinal Cannabis Legally
3. How to Speak to your Doctor about Medicinal Cannabis
4. Information Sheet for Physicians
5. Where to Find Cannabis for Medicinal Purposes
6. A Few Tips for Safer Use and Better Health
7. Cooking with Cannabis
8. Tips for Growing Cannabis Safely
9. How to Deal with the Stigma and Discrimination of Cannabis Use

Contact Information:

These fact sheets have been prepared by the Canadian AIDS Society, in consultation with a National Steering Committee and a Legal Consultant. They are easily photocopied. We encourage you to distribute them widely.

For updates on these fact sheets, or for more information, please visit our web site at <www.cdnaids.ca/cannabis> or contact us at:

Canadian AIDS Society
190 O'Connor Street, Suite 800
Ottawa ON, Canada, K2P 2R3

Tel: 1-613-230-3580
Toll free: 1-800-499-1986



Why Cook with Cannabis?

You may wish to cook with cannabis to reduce the amount that you smoke, to have a longer or different effect, or to have a convenient way of medicating if you are in an environment where you cannot smoke.

Advantages

- It can reduce or eliminate the amount of cannabis you smoke, which may lead to better lung health.
- Some of the effects of cannabis are more pronounced when it is eaten.
- The effects last longer, which means you do not have to take it as often.
- It is easier to be discreet than when smoking it. You can eat food which contains cannabis in places where you cannot smoke it.

Disadvantages

- It is a more potent way of consuming cannabis, so you must be more careful with the dose.
- It takes a lot longer to feel the effects. As such, it is trickier to control the dose and requires some trial and error to get it right.
- It requires some practice and experience, and a lot of cannabis, which can be costly.
- It can be time consuming to prepare.
- If you use cannabis to relieve nausea and vomiting, you may not feel up to eating it.

Difference Between Eating and Smoking Cannabis

Eating cannabis is quite different from smoking it.

You may already know this if you have eaten it before, or if you have taken some of the pharmaceutical cannabinoids that are available in pill form. Compared to effect of smoking, which is almost immediate and peaks within minutes, it can take up to an hour or more for the effect to come on

when cannabis is eaten. The effect of cannabis when eaten is also felt more slowly and gradually. The effect lasts for hours, sometimes 5 hours or more. The effect also feels different from smoking. Some people describe it as being more “in the body”, which is good for those who use cannabis for pain.

Tips

- Be aware of your dietary requirements (for example, if you are a diabetic) when cooking with cannabis and select your ingredients accordingly. Speak with your nutritionist.
- Eating raw herbal cannabis will not have an effect. You need to activate the cannabinoids with heat, either through cooking, smoking or vaporizing, or by dry heat conversion (see www.thevics.com/recipes/cannamist.htm).
- If you did not prepare the food that contains cannabis yourself, make sure you ask about the potency of the product. For example, you may find out that a cookie contains about a quarter gram of cannabis. A good dose to start with is from 1/8 to 1/2 gram of cannabis until you find out how it affects you. If you are not sure, take less rather than more and see how it goes.
- Cannabis is “fat-soluble”. It requires some sort of fat or oil product to bind to when cooking with it. Water does a poor job of extracting the cannabinoids (THC and others). For example, if you make a cannabis tea, adding milk or soy milk to it and simmering it for a while on low heat on the stove will help extract the cannabinoids out of the herb.
- Hemp or cannabis seeds do not contain any cannabinoids so they will not help you with your medicinal needs. They are, however, very tasty in a salad and good for you!
- The leftover leaves, or “shake” from your harvest can be used for cooking. This is a great way to make the best use of the plants you harvest. They also contain cannabinoids, though in lesser quantity than the buds (flowers).
- Keep in mind that the strain of the cannabis, the potency, the part of the plant that is used (leaves or flowers), the body size of the person consuming and the experience of the person consuming all come into play when considering a dose. Here are some guidelines for starting doses for eating cannabis for a person of about 68kg (150lbs) who has some experience with cannabis:
 - cannabis leaf (shake): 1/2 gram to 2 grams
 - cannabis flowers (buds) with seeds: 1/4 gram to 1 gram
 - sinsemilla flowers (buds with no seeds): 1/8 gram to 1/2 gram
- Note that low doses work well to stimulate appetite.
- Store food that contains cannabis in the fridge or freezer, and label it carefully in case someone else finds it!
- Never give food that contains cannabis to someone without their knowledge or consent.
- Avoid using alcohol at the same time as eating cannabis.

Too much cannabis

It is possible to consume too much cannabis when eating cannabis, NOT in the sense that it will kill you, but too much cannabis can be an unpleasant experience.

You would have to consume 682 kg (1500 pounds) of cannabis in 15 minutes to die of an overdose and even that has never been proven. Nevertheless, caution must be taken when consuming it in food. Some people get impatient waiting for the effect and eat more, thinking that they need more. Make sure you wait at least two hours before consuming more, just to be sure. Please refer to the fact sheet on “Tips for Safer Use and Better Health” for more information.

A person who has eaten too much cannabis may be dizzy, agitated, nervous or paranoid. When this happens, the person has to be kept calm and reassured that this too shall pass. The most intense feelings will last about an hour and the effects of the cannabis should wear off in about 4 or 5 hours. While they are not in physical danger, they may feel chilly. If so, keep them warm. Most people fall asleep quickly.

Useful Resources

- The Vancouver Island Compassion Society recipes at <thevics.com/vicsdocs.htm>
- Marijuana Herbal Cookbook by Tom Flowers
- The Art and Science of Cooking With Cannabis: The Most Effective Methods of Preparing Food & Drink With Marijuana, Hashish & Hash Oil by Adam Gottlieb
- Stir Crazy: Cooking With Cannabis by Bobcat Press
- Gourmet Cannabis Cookery; The High Art of Marijuana Cuisine by Dan D. Lyon

A Few Recipes

Butter Extract¹

One of the best ways to cook with cannabis is to first prepare cannabis butter. Butter is great for extracting THC from the cannabis. Butter extract is also easy to make and can be used in many recipes. To make butter extract:

1. Heat 5 cups of water in a pot over medium-high heat.
2. Add 1 oz (28 grams) of shake (leaves) **OR** 7-14 grams of bud, depending on the potency (see “Tips” above).
3. Add 3/4 pound of butter.
4. Bring to a boil, cover and simmer on low-heat for 1 1/2 to 2 hours, stirring occasionally.
5. Strain the mix through a sieve into a container. Press out the butter and water that remains in the leaves or buds with a spoon.
6. Boil 2 cups of water and pour it over the leaves or buds to remove any leftover butter. Press again. Discard the leftover leaves or buds. They no longer contain any THC or other cannabinoids.
7. Let the mixture set until the water and butter separate. Put the liquid in the fridge.
8. When cooled, the butter extract will harden on top of the water. Collect the butter extract and refrigerate it until you use it for cooking or baking. Discard the leftover water.
9. You can use the butter extract on toast or vegetables like you would regular butter. Keep in mind that less than a teaspoon is probably a good dose to start with. You can use the butter in your favourite recipes.

“Baked Cookies”

1. Preheat oven at 300° F (149° C). The temperature of the oven is deliberately lower than usual cookie recipes to avoid vaporizing too much of the cannabinoids. The baking time is longer than usual cookie recipes to compensate for the lower temperature.
2. Mix together:
 - 1/2 cup cannabis butter (prepared as described above)
 - 1/4 cup regular butter
 - 3/4 cup milk, soy milk or half & half cream
 - 1/3 cup wheat flour (or other flour)
 - 1 egg
3. Beat for 5 minutes.
4. Mix in:
 - 3/4 cup sugar or maple syrup
 - 1 teaspoon orange or vanilla extract (optional)
 - 1/2 teaspoon nutmeg (optional)
5. Sift in:
 - 1 teaspoon baking powder
 - 2 cups flour
6. Beat with a mixer until thoroughly blended.
7. Stir in 1 cup of raisins, nuts or chocolate chips, if you like.
8. Spoon onto a greased cookie sheet with a tablespoon.
9. Bake for 25-30 minutes. Makes about 28 small cookies

¹ The recipes for “Butter Extract” and “Baked Cookies” have been adapted from the “Butter Extracts” and “Greenies” recipes in Tom Flowers’ *Marijuana Herbal Cookbook: Recipes for Recreation and Health*. Flowers Publishing; 1995. This is a great cookbook to consult.

